DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 088 747 SO 007 096

TITLE Report of the International Bureau of Education on Its Activities.

INSTITUTION United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). General Conference.

PUB DATE 18 Aug 72

NOTE 7p.; Report to the General Conference, Seventeenth Session, Paris, 1972

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50

DESCRIPTORS Clearinghouses; *Comparative Education; *Documentation; Educational Objectives; *Educational Planning; Educational Trends; Information Dissemination; Information Networks; *International Education; *International Organizations; International Programs; Resource Centers; Social Influences

IDENTIFIERS International Bureau of Education

ABSTRACT

This second report by the Council of the International Bureau of Education covers the period since the close of the sixteenth session of the General Conference to 31 July 1972. It deals with the activities of the Council itself, the steps taken to develop the programme of the International Bureau of Education during the period under review, and the establishment of a framework for the future programme of the Bureau. The Bureau's activities have included the 33rd International Conference on Education, 1971; information documentation and the establishment of a world network for documentation; publications dissemination; the International Exhibition on Education containing audio-visual materials; and comparative studies in education aimed toward the theme of the next international conference, "education, training and employment." (Author/JH)

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General Conference

Seventeenth session, Paris 1972

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18 August 1972

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Item 13.3 of the Provisional Agenda

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCATION ON ITS ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

In accordance with the provisions of Article V, paragraph (d) of the Statutes of the International Bureau of Education, the Council of the Bureau submits to the General Conference its second report on activities of the IBE.

This report covers the period since the close of the sixteenth session of the General Conference to 31 July 1972. It deals with the activities of the Council itself, the steps taken to develop the programme of the International Bureau of Education during the period under review, and the establishment of a framework for the future programme of the Bureau.

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1. This second report of the Council of the International Bureau of Education is submitted to the General Conference of Unesco at its seventeenth session. The report covers the period since the close of the sixteenth session of the General Conference to 31 July 1972, and will be brought up to date by the President's oral presentation. This report is presented in conformity with Article V, paragraph (d) of the Bureau's statutes, to enable the General Conference to appreciate the line of action followed by the IBE, the rate at which its activities are developing, to have an awareness of its problems and to give its programme the general orientation desirable.

2. This has been the first biennium in which the IBE was fully integrated with Unesco. The Council was unanimous in expressing its profound satisfaction with the progress achieved during this period as well as the conviction that the IBE is now able to develop its activities further, to assume more and more effectively, according to the means allotted to it, the responsibility which its statutes assign to it within the Organization. The Council also wishes to express once more its esteem and confidence in the Director and staff of the Bureau.

The IBE Council

3. During the period under review, the Council, consisting of representatives of the following Member States: Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ethiopia, France, Gabon, Federal Republic of Germany, India, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, USSR, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, Yugoslavia, held four sessions, in December 1970, September and November 1971 and July 1972. It elected the following office-bearers:

President: Mr. Jean Thomas (France)

Vice-Presidents: H. E. Mr. Blaise Senghor (Senegal)
Mr. Joseph-Georges Zaarour (Lebanon)

Having been informed later that Mr. Zaarour would be unable to attend further sessions, the Council elected H. E. Dr. Gabriel Betancur-Mejía (Colombia) as acting Vice-President.

4. The Council has striven to define more precisely, in the light of experience, the middle- and long-term objectives of the IBE, as well as the rôle the Bureau should play in developing a world-wide system for the exchange of information and in serving as an international centre of comparative study and reflection in the field of education. With regard to studies, the Council kept up to date a list of themes of general interest, selecting from the list those major problems which should be proposed to the General Conference for treatment by the International Conference on Education. Among these may be mentioned: changing rôle of the teacher, educational technology, qualitative aspects of education, including pedagogy, and continuing education. In addition, the Council has developed a new regulation for the Permanent Exhibition on Education, along with a code of technical specifications for countries wishing to participate in the exhibition.

5. Within the framework of the decisions of the General Conference, the Council at its sessions of December 1970 and November 1971 carried out its duty of establishing the detailed programme of work for the IBE for the year ahead; it also discussed the reports which the Director of the Bureau presents at each session in order to supervise the execution of the approved programme. As the International Conference on Education expressed at its 1970 session the wish that the Council should take a more active part in the preparation of future sessions, the Council arranged to meet immediately before the September 1971 International Conference. It drew up proposals which it submitted to the Conference concerning the organization of work. Likewise, the Council has attempted to evaluate the achievements of the Conference, and while acknowledging the progress that has been made, the Council has explored ways of making the Conference still more effective.

6. In conformity with the statutes, in November 1971 the Council drew up the Draft General Programme and Budget of the IBE for 1973-1974 for submission to the General Conference with the observations or recommendations of the Director-General and the Executive Board. As a result of the Director-General's observations however, the President with the full support of the Steering Committee consulted Council members by correspondence (in keeping with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure) about a possible revision of the budget estimates. It was on the basis of this consultation that the proposal incorporated in the Draft Programme and Budget (document 17 C/5) was drawn up. Finally, the Council drafted at its meeting in July 1972 the report on the activities of the IBE which it has to present to the General Conference.

7. As may be seen, it is essential that the Council remain in continuous and close touch with the work of the IBE. Yet the Council is by statute composed of twenty-one Member States nominated by the General Conference and each of these States designates its representative. Without of course questioning the statute, the Council has observed by experience that a frequent change of representatives tends to affect the continuity of its work and renders difficult the full discharge of its responsibilities to the Organization. The Council therefore wishes that States, once they are nominated as members for four years by the General Conference, would designate their representatives and maintain them in this position as far as possible for the duration of their mandates.

Programme activities

8. During 1971 the 33rd International Conference on Education was a central preoccupation of the IBE. Preparatory work involved a meeting of experts on the social background of students (January) in which national specialists as well as a number of field experts of Unesco and staff members of the Specialized Agencies took part. In March, a small consultant group was convened to advise the staff on approaches to major trends in education. The Conference was held in Geneva, at the Palais Wilson, from 15 to 23 September 1971. The representatives of 90 governments attended the Conference as participants; 8 organizations of the United Nations system, 4 intergovernmental organizations and 25 non-governmental organizations were also represented. Altogether 243 delegates (including 17 Ministers and 11 Vice-Ministers of Education) and 39 observers attended the Conference.

9. The main item on the agenda was "The social background of students and their chance of success at school". The Conference also held a general debate on "Main trends in education". In the light of experience gained at the 1970 session, a number of changes were introduced in the preparation and conduct of the Conference, including a more active rôle of the Council of the IBE in preparing the Conference and in animating the general debate on major trends in education. Evening sessions, one of which was devoted to the memory of Pedro Rosselló, and a meeting between delegates and a Youth Forum were organized within the framework of the Conference. The Conference was extensively reported in the specialized education press of a considerable number of Member States. The official report of the Conference was issued by Unesco in four languages before the end of 1971.

10. In 1972 the Bureau staff has begun to prepare for the next session of the Conference, which is proposed for 1973, with the special theme of the relationships between education, training and employment, with particular reference to secondary education. The inquiry on this subject raised considerable interest, and replies from many Member States revealed that a considerable amount of research had been undertaken to prepare an answer. At the level of inter-Agency co-operation, several programme units of Unesco, ILO, FAO and WHO have collaborated in the conduct of the inquiry.

11. The period 1971-1972 has been an active one for the IBE Documentation Centre. Some 10,500 new books and documents have contributed to the growth of the main section. At the same time the IBE has begun to hold materials in microfiche form and even, to a modest extent, to start the production of microfiche documents. Thus, by a special arrangement with the U.S. Office of Education, the IBE now holds the full collection on microfiche of the Educational Resources Information Center reports (from 1966 onward) as well as the current output of some 10,000 items a year. Access to these reports is obtained through a computerized index stored with the International Labour Office. As a result of Unesco's own programme for reproducing field mission reports in microfiche, a second element has been added to the IBE collection. Finally, the Bureau began in 1971 to prepare microfiche copies of all national reports sent officially to the IBE as well as replies to IBE questionnaires. These form the "Series of International Reports on Education", already number about 200, and enable the IBE to make available to agencies and research institutions an important group of documents hitherto inaccessible.

12. A systematic revision of the periodicals held by the IBE has been started and is still in progress. A balanced coverage of all aspects of education is worked out for each country, and the draft list thus established is submitted to national experts for advice. The final IBE periodicals list does therefore represent a useful cross-section of the world education press, with particular emphasis on bibliographic, indexing and abstracting journals. One issue of the IBE Bulletin is to be devoted to publishing the list, along with details on periodicity, subscription rates, editorial address and policy. In addition, measures have been taken to set up a programme of systematic scanning of the

journals regularly received by the IBE, with a view to improving control of up-to-date information on educational developments in the countries of the world.

13. Preliminary steps have been taken towards the computerized processing of information and documentation. These include close co-operation with the corresponding services of Unesco Headquarters and of the International Labour Office, whose computer facilities have been made available as from 1972. In-service training of the staff in the use of mechanized documentation techniques has been provided. To prepare the ground for a more extensive use of the computer, the IBE began in 1972 to draw up a Unesco-IBE education thesaurus, i.e. an international list of terms in English and French for use in indexing documents and recording data in a form suitable for computer storage. The first edition of the thesaurus will be completed in 1972, thus permitting the creation from 1973 onwards of a data bank into which the production of national information systems, such as ERIC in the U. S. A., can be merged.

14. Progress has been made in giving effect to a world network of national and regional centres for educational documentation and information. For ultimately the successful exchange of educational experience depends on a co-operative enterprise in which national centres take full part as contributors and users. The rôle of Unesco and particularly of the IBE consists in bringing national and regional centres into effective contact. During 1971-1972 the IBE undertook a series of activities for this purpose. Direct contacts were made possible by staff missions to Unesco's Regional Offices for Education in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and to a number of national centres in Asian, Latin American and European Member States. The Bureau contributed, along with the Unesco Secretariat and the Santiago Office, to the organization of a regional seminar of heads of documentation centres, in Latin America, held in Panama in November 1971. The Seminar helped to foster exchanges between the centres as well as to strengthen their relations with the IBE.

15. The Panama seminar pointed to the urgency of improving the training of specialists engaged in national centres of educational documentation and information. A contract was concluded in 1972 between the IBE and the Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Education in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The Cairo Centre undertook to organize an intensive three-month course for personnel of national centres in Arab countries. The course started on 15 April, and one IBE staff member took an active part in the conduct of the seminar. Initial reports from Member States concerned are appreciative of this type of practical co-operation at a regional level.

16. A measure of central leadership is provided to the network of centres through the setting up by the IBE of a Steering Committee on Educational Documentation and Abstracting. This group met for the first time in Geneva in June 1971 and again in June 1972. It was composed of specialists from the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, the Center for Educational Communication and the United States Office of Education, the Documentation Centre for Education in Europe (Council of Europe) and the Cairo Centre of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as well as staff members from Unesco's three regional offices for education (Bangkok, Dakar, Santiago) and from the Unesco and ILO Secretariats. As it was constituted, the Committee was able to take a global view of the problems of educational communication and to lay the foundation for effective programmes of co-operation. One specific outcome of the Committee's work is a projected technical guide for developing countries which the IBE has begun to prepare.

17. The publication programme of the Bureau has, in large measure, reflected the work of the thirty-second and thirty-third sessions of the International Conference on Education and contributed to a world-wide exchange of education experience. A number of titles have been published in English and French in the Unesco-IBE series "Studies and Surveys in Education". These were Wastage in education: a world problem, by L. Pauli and M. A. Brimer; A statistical study of wastage at school, prepared by the Unesco Office of Statistics; Initiatives in education; and The social background of students and their chance of success at school is now at press.

18. Since the beginning of the biennium, the former "Bulletin of the IBE" has been published under its new title "Educational Documentation and Information" and the presentation was improved. The policy of devoting each issue to a select annotated bibliography on a specific theme has continued. During 1971-1972, the following subject areas were dealt with: financing of education; social background of students and their chance of success at school; school guidance; vocational guidance; the causes and consequences of early school leaving (résumés of research projects); rural education; evaluation of achievement; mental health and education. In addition, each issue has a section devoted to sources and resources in the field of educational documentation and information.

19. The Co-operative Educational Abstracting Service (CEAS) was placed on a regular and systematic basis during 1971-1972. Agreements were reached with institutions in more than 60 Member States for selecting materials and preparing abstracts; care was taken to ensure a geographic balance. Over 250 abstracts were published in English and French during the biennium and distributed in batches at quarterly intervals. A cumulative index to abstracts issued since 1968 has been published. During the latter half of 1972 - in collaboration with the Regional Office in Santiago - a Spanish language version of a selected number of abstracts was issued. As a part of CEAS, a new series of country education profiles has been started and, so far, profiles on 70 countries have been prepared by the IBE staff. It is expected that all Member States will be covered in a two-year period, whereupon the cycle will begin anew. Steps have also been taken to design an extension of the abstracting service into specialized areas of education. The first such area will be adult education. Joint planning by the Unesco Secretariat and the IBE should lead in 1973-1974 to the setting up of an information service which will fit into the IBE pattern but be operated co-operatively by specialized national and regional centres.

20. In order to provide a vehicle of dissemination for the study activities of the Bureau, a new series of documents, "Experiments and Innovations in Education", has been introduced. In the second half of 1972, four case studies are being published in English, French and Spanish versions. They deal respectively with a project for televised adult education in Canada, innovations in the teaching of reading in England, a study of school readiness in Poland and a theoretical study of the process of innovation.

21. An essential part of the Bureau activities is directed towards the dissemination of information on education to Member States and Unesco National Commissions, national educational documentation centres, educational journals and to individual educators. This servicing activity has been developed considerably during the period under review, with the creation of a collection of materials for free distribution. The Bureau dealt with some 900 requests for information in writing, and an average of 400 publications were distributed each month.

22. Information of an audio-visual nature is for the most part embodied in the International Exhibition on Education. While the Exhibition has been maintained at its former level, the period 1971-1972 has seen serious efforts by the IBE Council and staff to define afresh the purposes and scope of this collection. Regulations and a form of agreement with Member States wishing to take part in the Exhibition have been adopted; these instruments provide the necessary foundation for a reform of the Exhibition. With the help of consultants from France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the Bureau has also drawn up plans for a phased change of the contents.

23. In this context, the helpful co-operation of the education authorities of the Republic and Canton of Geneva led to the production of a short film on the "Cycle d'orientation" in Geneva. The film was reproduced in super-8mm cassette form by the IBE, with commentary in English, French and Spanish, and distributed to centres in 25 Member States. The object of the experiment is to examine the use of film in a comparative education context, and to test the willingness of national authorities to produce similar films for use in the International Exhibition or wider circulation to other Member States.

24. Comparative studies have for the most part been centred on the expected themes of the next International Conference on Education. The Bureau prepared and sent out questionnaires on "The relationships between education, training and employment, with particular reference to secondary education, its aims, structure and content" early in 1972. Analysis of the replies from Member States on national educational and training policies, and more specific answers to questions involving structure, organization and content of secondary education will provide the working papers for presentation at the Conference. Member States have also been asked to comment on major trends in educational development in their countries in the years 1971-1972 and 1972-1973, as well as to prepare by 1973 a national report for submission to the Conference.

25. In preparing the inquiry on the theme "education, training and employment", the IBE organized in October 1971 an inter-agency meeting with the participation of ILO, FAO, WHO and Unesco Headquarters, to discuss the draft questionnaire and to co-ordinate efforts of the Agencies in preparing the Conference. The draft questionnaire was pre-tested by the IBE staff members with the educational authorities of three countries - France, Hungary and the United Kingdom. The three Unesco regional centres for education also shared in preparing this inquiry. The second meeting of the Inter-Agency Working Group will take place early in October 1972 to examine the findings of the survey.

26. A study on how change takes place in education was started in May 1971 by the convening of a panel of consultants from Australia, France, Poland and Switzerland. Four case studies were then prepared and were discussed by the panel, with a view to publication in the new "Experiments and Innovations in Education" series. A further set of cases were selected for study in the course of 1972.

27. A fresh departure in 1971-1972 has been an attempt by the Bureau to associate research institutions and comparative educators more closely with the programme. Steps have been taken in two directions. First, to accompany the official inquiry on the relationships of education, training and employment, the IBE has commissioned the Ecole de Psychologie et des Sciences de l'Education of Geneva University to make a study on the evaluation of secondary education (with the help of eight national research centres) and a survey of research on the aspirations of young people in regard to education, training and employment. The results of these studies will be placed before the International Conference on Education.

28. In the second place, a better flow of information to comparative educators should result from the setting up of a liaison office for comparative education in mid-1971. The main product is a newsletter which is sent out at roughly quarterly intervals to some 150 institutions and individual specialists. Reactions so far have been favourable. In the same context, the IBE has offered limited facilities to the International Schools Association, which in 1972 established its secretariat in the Palais Wilson, alongside the liaison office for comparative education.

Co-ordination

29. During the period, the IBE staff have worked closely with colleagues of the Unesco Secretariat, the International Institute of Educational Planning and the Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg, to ensure adequate co-ordination in documentation and study activities. The Directors of the IBE, IIEP and the Hamburg Institute were present or represented at the meetings of the other two governing bodies. The purpose of this co-ordination, in view of the specific vocation and status of each of the institutions, is not only to avoid duplication but also to ensure complementarity of activities. It has already made it possible to transfer or to consider transferring to the IBE certain tasks which fall within its purview. The efforts made in this direction will be pursued so as to eliminate any overlapping that might still exist.

30. Mention should be made of the effective collaboration between the IBE and the Documentation Centre for Education in Europe (Council of Europe).

31. Relationships with the authorities of the host country, Switzerland, have continued to be close and favourable. These bear particularly on the question of the premises to be occupied in future by the IBE. A long-term solution is being sought. The question is of particular importance and concern to the Council in view of the expansion of the Bureau's activities. It is at present being considered by the Swiss authorities, who view it favourably.

Staff and administration

32. The integration of IBE staff members into Unesco personnel took effect at the beginning of 1971. Recruitment for vacant posts has been completed and the full establishment of the Bureau was realized by Autumn 1971. The new structure of the Secretariat flows from the definition of the rôle of the IBE as a Unesco centre for comparative education, called upon to provide a service of educational information to Member States. The IBE Secretariat is made up of two divisions: on the one side is the staff dealing with documentation and comparative studies - concerned with the gathering and processing of information; on the other side are the outward-turned functions - handling of Council affairs and all the extension services of the Bureau (publications, replies to inquiries, relations with other agencies and institutions as well as administration), under a programme co-ordinator. The total strength of the IBE staff is at present 27 (13 professional and 14 general services staff). No increase is foreseen in 1973-1974.

33. In order to complement the limited professional staff of the Bureau, the services of 5 interns (2 in 1970-1971, 3 in 1971-1972) have been secured during the period under review. The interns are graduate students who are preparing a doctoral thesis on comparative education, and are interested in acquiring international experience through their association with the IBE during one academic year. They came from Iran, Japan, Turkey and the U. S. A.